

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
FAMILY SUPPORT DIVISION

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS FACT SHEET

The Family Support Division (FSD), through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Distribution Program, provides food to help improve the nutritional status of children and needy adults.

The program has a twofold purpose:

- To improve the nutritional quality of the diets of participating persons.
- To help strengthen the agricultural market for products produced by American farmers.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM OPERATE?

To aid American farmers, USDA buys food under price-support and surplus-removal legislation and makes this food available to States. In addition, some program funds are appropriated by Congress to purchase foods on the open market. USDA pays for the initial processing and packaging of the food and for transporting it to designated points within each State. FSD is then responsible for storing the food, transporting it throughout the State, and distributing it at the local level to eligible recipient organizations.

Under certain terms and conditions, donated foods may be obtained from FSD for use in hospitals, nursing homes, retirement homes, other group homes, senior citizens centers, child care centers, emergency shelters, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, meals on wheels, sheltered workshops, substance abuse centers, correctional facilities, halfway houses and other charitable institutions. FSD also distributes foods to residential child care institutions, summer food service programs for children, disaster relief agencies and six non-profit food banks that provide USDA commodities to food pantries for needy persons/households and to organizations providing meals for the homeless.

In general, recipient agencies are required to:

- Be public or private non-profit and exempt from federal tax.
- File an application.
- Sign an agreement for use of donated foods.
- Serve meals or distribute commodity foods to needy persons.

The amount of food an agency receives depends on the number of needy persons or households served and the quantities made available by USDA.

Federal legislation authorizes USDA-donated food distributions for the following:

- 1) Charitable Institutions
- 2) Residential Child Care Institutions *
- 3) Summer Food Service Programs for Children **
- 4) The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- 5) Disaster Relief Organizations

* Eligible for cash payments from USDA in addition to commodities.

** Eligible for cash payments from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in addition to commodities.

WHAT FOODS ARE AVAILABLE TO PROGRAM RECIPIENTS?

The foods that USDA donates vary from time to time depending on market conditions. At the present time, Charitable Institutions are eligible to receive commodities deemed “surplus” by USDA. Food items include fruits, vegetables and juices. Occasionally, meats, poultry and fish are available.

Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) are eligible to receive certain cereal and grain products such as flour, cornmeal, rice, rolled oats, macaroni, spaghetti and soybean oil and shortening. In addition, both RCCIs and Summer Food Service Programs for Children are offered peanut products and a variety of meats, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides food banks USDA-donated commodities (similar to those listed above) in household size containers for distribution to food pantries for needy persons and households in situations of emergency or distress. Food banks also distribute TEFAP commodities to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters and other like organizations that serve meals to homeless persons as an integral part of their normal activities. Surplus foods, when available, may be distributed to second priority agencies such as child care centers, senior centers, residential facilities, sheltered workshops, etc.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For Specific information relating to Food Distribution Programs, direct inquiries to:

FSD - Food Distribution Unit
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